

Riggs National Bank, Seventh & D Sts Office  
318 Seventh St., NW  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC- 496

HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
332-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS

HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
332-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This branch bank is located at the northeast corner of Square 432 at the intersection of Seventh and D Streets, NW. The thirty-two foot high limestone-clad building fully occupies its twenty-eight by one hundred foot site. The two-story building is characterized by the use of restrained classical detailing on its facade and in the main interior public space. The narrow (east) facade faces Seventh Street and contains the entrance. A three bay organization is evident in the upper story of the stone-clad facade. On the ground floor the southern (left-hand) bay contains the entry and the central and northern (right-hand) bays are combined into one large horizontal window. The entry and window are each set within a frame consisting of two pilasters and an entablature recessed within the plane of the wall. Wooden double-hung windows on the north facade and on the second story of the east facade are set into sharp-edged unornamented openings fitted with projecting stone sills. One of the typical sixteen-inch stone courses, located one full course beneath the second story windows, projects several inches to form a wide, continuous string course. This carries a flush molding on the east facade and is plain on the north facade. A small shallow cornice caps both facades. The west facade, which faces an alley (now park), is of white-painted common bond brick; the south wall is a party wall.

The window placement on the north facade reflects the internal organization. Four evenly spaced windows in the eastern portion of the ground floor light the main banking hall. Aligned above these, two clusters of three windows each correspond to upper floor offices. In the western portion, two smaller windows correspond to a mezzanine level within. A recess near the western end contains two simple wooden doors.

Set just behind the pilasters in the entryway on the east facade are panelled wood double doors. Behind these, aluminum-framed double doors are set into a door opening capped by a fluted wood-clad lintel and a transom window leaded with a fan pattern. This east entry leads to a marble-clad vestibule. The main banking hall, which is reached through a matching set of doors and window, also exhibits classical details. Pilasters on the north and south walls support paneled beams that cross the space. Two similarly detailed piers on the west of the space support a mezzanine level with paneled fascia. Floors are terrazzo; pilasters, walls and wood panels are painted.

## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

As the building now stands, it neither contributes to nor detracts significantly from the district. Though smaller than most of its neighbors on Seventh Street between C and E Streets, its vertical windows and its scale-giving classical details make it compatible with the surrounding buildings. Its high quality materials and workmanship, excellent repair, and viable use are virtues. The lofty main hall, with its white-painted classical moldings, is pleasant, though not distinguished. On the other hand, the overall exterior design is mediocre. Though individual details are classically derived, their combination is idiosyncrotic and often awkward. An example is the manner in which pilasters are recessed sideways into the openings in the east facade. Also, the cornice seems too small and the stringcourse too wide. Finally, the north facade, as modified in 1954, is an almost accidental result of the internal organization. It does little to enliven the street or add grace to the design.

The building that houses the Seventh and D Streets branch of the Riggs National Bank has a long history of use as a bank. Originally constructed as a four-story brick building before 1877, (No Building Permit available), it was altered in 1911 (Building Permit #467, 7/25/1911) and again in 1954 (Building Permit not available. Probably #A-61289, 11/26/1954). Prior to the 1911 alteration, the floor of the banking hall was higher, probably at the base of the present interior pilasters. A flight of stairs led to it from an entry located at approximately the same location as the current entry. Shops, accessible from D Street, were located beneath the banking hall. The 1911 alteration lowered the banking floor. The Seventh Street elevation was given a three-bay neoclassical facade with a giant order of rusticated pilasters, copper spandrel panels, and a projecting central entry portico. In 1954, the architect Leon Chatelain, Jr. and the Prescott Construction Company carried out a major alteration. The top two floors were removed and the rear (western) section rebuilt. The remaining brick facades were faced in limestone. The entry was moved to its original off-center position, and the banking hall's round-arched windows on the D Street elevation were given square heads.

A noteworthy feature within the bank is a vault door, dating from 1869, said to be the oldest in use in Washington.

September 1979

AD-100-104-105-106-107-108-109-110-111-112-113-114-115-116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-125-126-127-128-129-130-131-132-133-134-135-136-137-138-139-140-141-142-143-144-145-146-147-148-149-150-151-152-153-154-155-156-157-158-159-160-161-162-163-164-165-166-167-168-169-170-171-172-173-174-175-176-177-178-179-180-181-182-183-184-185-186-187-188-189-190-191-192-193-194-195-196-197-198-199-200-201-202-203-204-205-206-207-208-209-210-211-212-213-214-215-216-217-218-219-220-221-222-223-224-225-226-227-228-229-230-231-232-233-234-235-236-237-238-239-240-241-242-243-244-245-246-247-248-249-250-251-252-253-254-255-256-257-258-259-260-261-262-263-264-265-266-267-268-269-270-271-272-273-274-275-276-277-278-279-280-281-282-283-284-285-286-287-288-289-290-291-292-293-294-295-296-297-298-299-300-301-302-303-304-305-306-307-308-309-310-311-312-313-314-315-316-317-318-319-320-321-322-323-324-325-326-327-328-329-330-331-332-333-334-335-336-337-338-339-340-341-342-343-344-345-346-347-348-349-350-351-352-353-354-355-356-357-358-359-360-361-362-363-364-365-366-367-368-369-370-371-372-373-374-375-376-377-378-379-380-381-382-383-384-385-386-387-388-389-390-391-392-393-394-395-396-397-398-399-400-401-402-403-404-405-406-407-408-409-410-411-412-413-414-415-416-417-418-419-420-421-422-423-424-425-426-427-428-429-430-431-432-433-434-435-436-437-438-439-440-441-442-443-444-445-446-447-448-449-450-451-452-453-454-455-456-457-458-459-460-461-462-463-464-465-466-467-468-469-470-471-472-473-474-475-476-477-478-479-480-481-482-483-484-485-486-487-488-489-490-491-492-493-494-495-496-497-498-499-500-501-502-503-504-505-506-507-508-509-510-511-512-513-514-515-516-517-518-519-520-521-522-523-524-525-526-527-528-529-530-531-532-533-534-535-536-537-538-539-540-541-542-543-544-545-546-547-548-549-550-551-552-553-554-555-556-557-558-559-560-561-562-563-564-565-566-567-568-569-570-571-572-573-574-575-576-577-578-579-580-581-582-583-584-585-586-587-588-589-590-591-592-593-594-595-596-597-598-599-600-601-602-603-604-605-606-607-608-609-610-611-612-613-614-615-616-617-618-619-620-621-622-623-624-625-626-627-628-629-630-631-632-633-634-635-636-637-638-639-640-641-642-643-644-645-646-647-648-649-650-651-652-653-654-655-656-657-658-659-660-661-662-663-664-665-666-667-668-669-670-671-672-673-674-675-676-677-678-679-680-681-682-683-684-685-686-687-688-689-690-691-692-693-694-695-696-697-698-699-700-701-702-703-704-705-706-707-708-709-710-711-712-713-714-715-716-717-718-719-720-721-722-723-724-725-726-727-728-729-730-731-732-733-734-735-736-737-738-739-740-741-742-743-744-745-746-747-748-749-750-751-752-753-754-755-756-757-758-759-760-761-762-763-764-765-766-767-768-769-770-771-772-773-774-775-776-777-778-779-780-781-782-783-784-785-786-787-788-789-790-791-792-793-794-795-796-797-798-799-800-801-802-803-804-805-806-807-808-809-810-811-812-813-814-815-816-817-818-819-820-821-822-823-824-825-826-827-828-829-830-831-832-833-834-835-836-837-838-839-840-841-842-843-844-845-846-847-848-849-850-851-852-853-854-855-856-857-858-859-860-861-862-863-864-865-866-867-868-869-870-871-872-873-874-875-876-877-878-879-880-881-882-883-884-885-886-887-888-889-890-891-892-893-894-895-896-897-898-899-900-901-902-903-904-905-906-907-908-909-910-911-912-913-914-915-916-917-918-919-920-921-922-923-924-925-926-927-928-929-930-931-932-933-934-935-936-937-938-939-940-941-942-943-944-945-946-947-948-949-950-951-952-953-954-955-956-957-958-959-960-961-962-963-964-965-966-967-968-969-970-971-972-973-974-975-976-977-978-979-980-981-982-983-984-985-986-987-988-989-990-991-992-993-994-995-996-997-998-999-1000

ADDENDUM

Riggs National Bank, Seventh and D Streets Office  
318 Seventh Street, NW  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-496

HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
332-

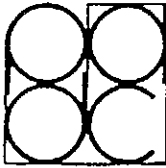
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Addendum to:

Riggs National Bank, 7th and D St. Office

HABS No. DC-496 (Page 3)



PENNSYLVANIA  
AVENUE  
DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION

425 13TH STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

## GENERAL CONSULTANTS

ANDERSON NOTTER/MARIANI  
GENERAL PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT  
DEVROUX & PURNELL  
ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS  
DAVID MCLAREN HART & ASSOCIATES  
PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT  
MONK DUNSTONE ASSOCIATES  
COST ESTIMATING CONSULTANT

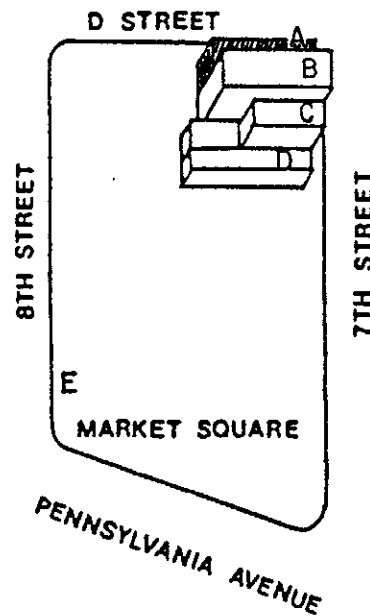
## HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

## BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

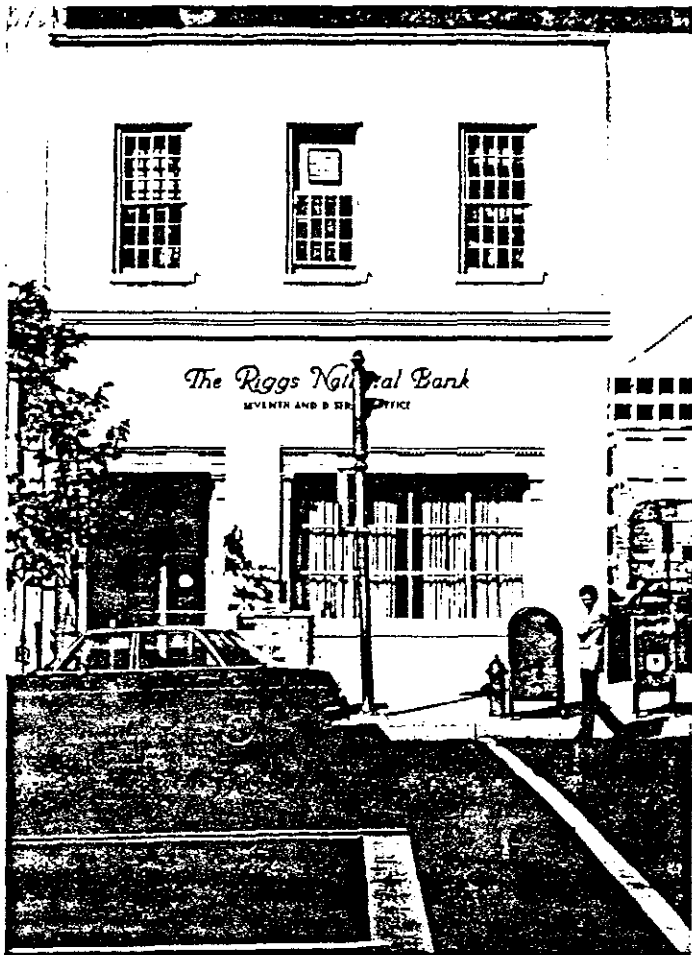
RIGGS NATIONAL BANK  
318 SEVENTH STREET, NW  
(SW CORNER OF SEVENTH AND D STREETS)

For documentation of individual buildings within Square 432, see:

- |   |   |                 |
|---|---|-----------------|
| A | Riggs National Bank, 7th and D Streets Office, 318 7th Street | HABS No. DC-496 |
| B | 314-316 Seventh Street, NW (Morton's)                         | HABS No. DC-495 |
| C | 312 Seventh Street, NW (COMMERCIAL BUILDING)                  | HABS No. DC-494 |
| D | 310 Seventh Street, NW (COMMERCIAL BUILDING)                  | HABS No. DC-587 |
| E | Kann, S. and Sons, Market Space, between 7th and 8th Streets  | HABS No. DC-365 |



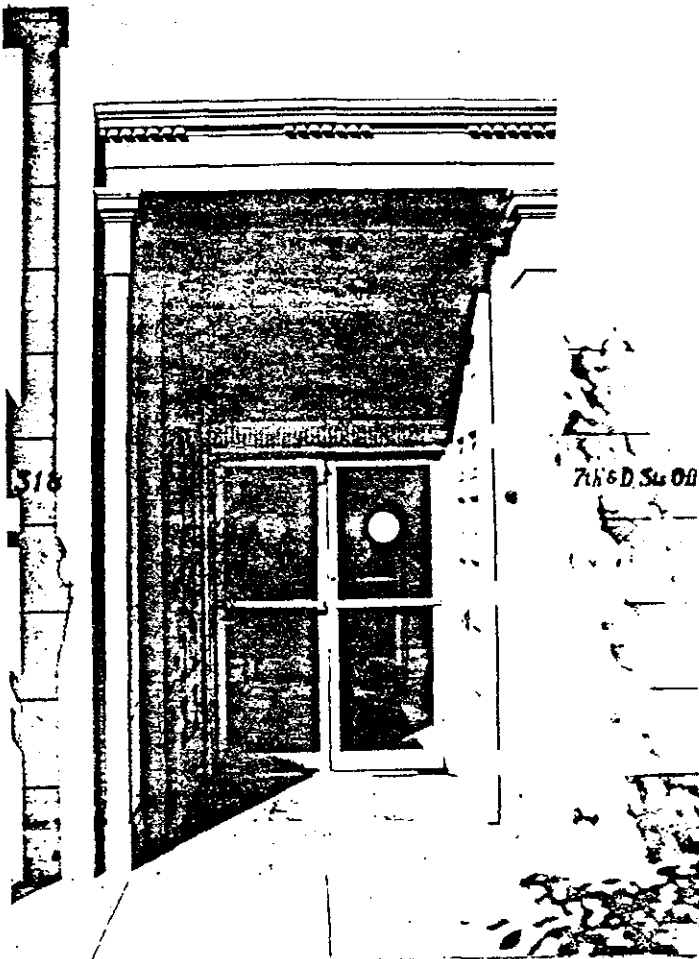
This documentation was produced for mitigation purposes by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. Additional documentation exists for Square 432, within which this structure stands. For photographs, historical, and descriptive data on Square 432, see HABS No. DC-484.



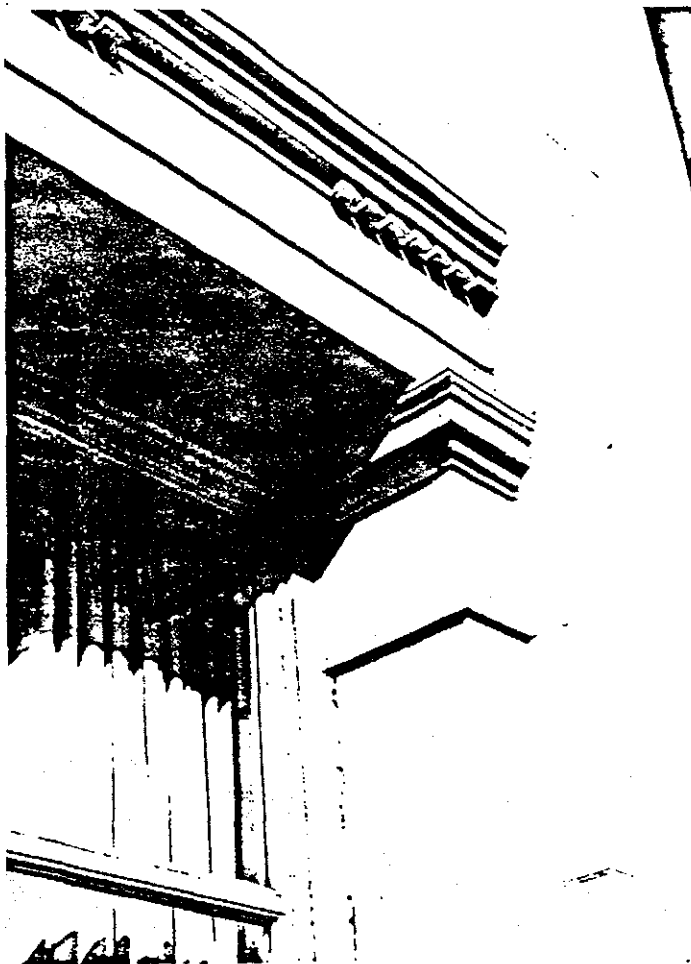
SEVENTH STREET  
(EAST FACADE)-



D STREET (NORTH) FACADE



EAST FACADE:  
ENTRANCE



EAST FACADE:  
DETAIL OF PILASTER CAPITAL  
AND ENTABLATURE

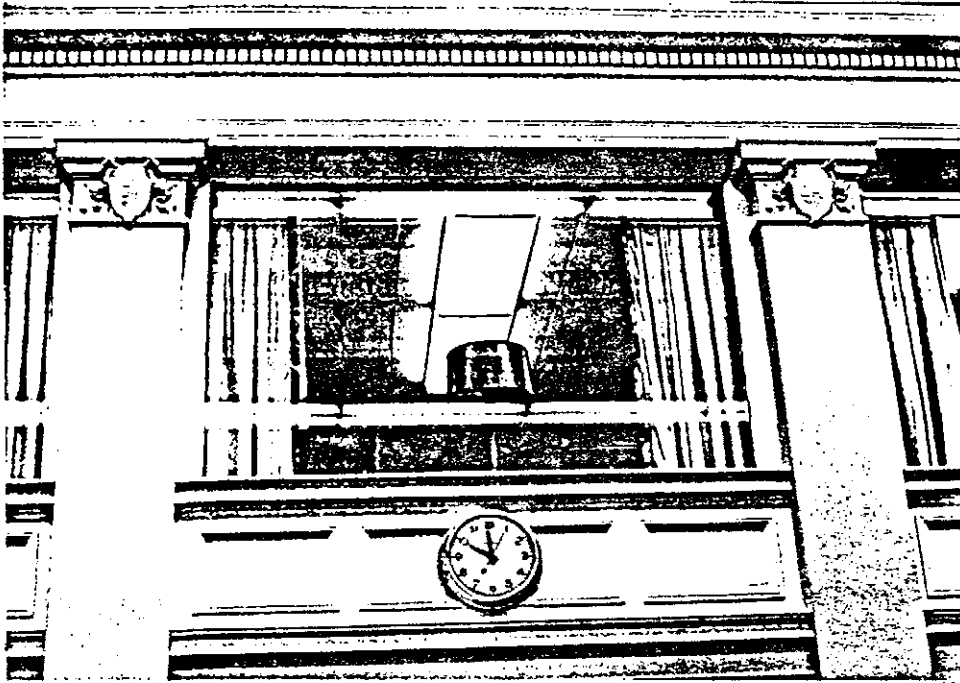


BANKING HALL: LOOKING WEST

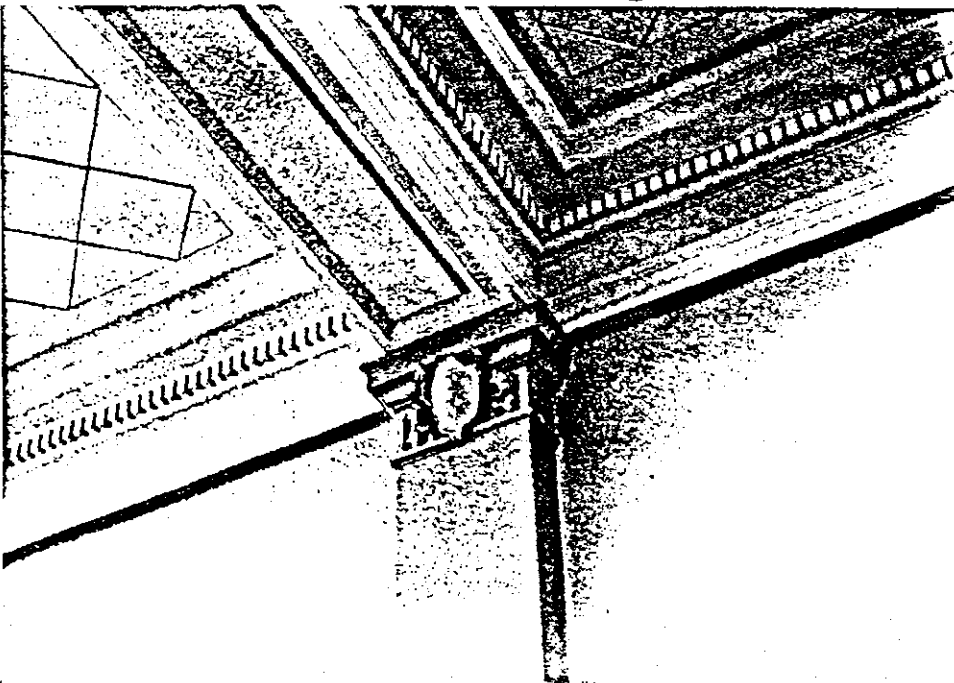


BANKING HALL: LOOKING EAST





BANKING HALL: DETAIL OF MEZZANINE



BANKING HALL: DETAIL OF PILASTER CAPITAL AND PANELLED CEILING BEAM



BANKING HALL:  
ENTRANCE VESTIBULE